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## A TRIP

NO. 2.

## INTO THE "SWATARA" REGION

OR

## AMONG THE "BETHEL MORAVIAN" SETTLEMENT OF BETHEL TOWNSHIP, LEBANON COUNTY, PENNA.

By E. W. S. PARTHEMORE.

Read at the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Dauphin County Historical Society, May 13th, 1807

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## THE MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT

IN BETHEL TOWNSHIP, LEBANON COUNTY.

The month of December, 1896, will long be remembered for the mildness of the weather. Almost every day resembled Indian summer. On just such a day the writer on the 13th of the month started from the city, before the gray streaks of the morning appeared in the eastern horizon, for Lebanon county, in the Swatara region, or Bethel township, to the Bethel Moravian Graveyard, which location gave the name to the township.

On arriving at Jonestown, originally called Williamsburg, we were reinforced by Esquire Christian D. Zehring, aged 76 years, and whose recollections of long ago are very good and his memory quite complete. He has been a justice of the peace for almost fifty years—one term in East Hanover township, four terms in Swatara township, which district was originally a part of Bethel, and is now closing his fifth term as the justice of Jonestown borough, originally a part of Bethel.

We started for Fredericksburg, which lays three unles, or as the German would tell you, "ein stunde," to the northeast, near the Blue Mountain. When the town was founded, it was named "Stumpe," after the founder, Frederick Stump, and in later years became famous as the birthplace of John Lick, the California millionaire and founder of the Lick Observatory, which stands on Mt. Washington, the gift of his munificence.

The first place we come to after leaving Jonestown, is the farm known from the earliest day as the Winger farm, and still in that name, upon which farm is erected a Dunkard meeting house and of which sect the Wingers are members. After driving a short distance farther, we pass another farm upon which is erected a barn which has stood there for more than a century, and the style of architecture does not betray the time in which it was creefed, not very deep nor high in the square, with a very steep coned roof. which, when it was first creeted, was covered with a thatched or straw roof. When the farm was originally taken up and occupied it was by a German, Jacob Snayely, who when the Indians entered into this district on one of their maranding tours, met the fate that befell so many in this region at that time, but his family escaped to the Tulpehocken settlement. where they found protection in the neighborhood where resided Conrad Weiser, the Indian diplomat, and Peter Spyker, the jurist. Sometime after the murder of Mr. Snavely, when everything seemed to be quiet and settled in the Bethel district, his wife, Mrs. Snavely, started for her home where her husband was murdered and scalped, to see if everything was peace and quiet, and if it were safe for her to return with her family. On returning to the Tulpehocken settlement, be-

lieving that it was judicious to bring her family back, after proceeding about two miles eastward from her farm and passing the old Swatara Church, a building long since razed and the graveyard destroyed. two Indians rushed forward to eatch her horse. She applied the whip vigorously upon the horse and for a few minutes the race was unto death, for the Indians followed her and so close that one of them grasped the saddle cloth, but the horse being fleet of foot and urged by the terrible whoop of the Indians, she managed to make her escape. Mrs. Snavely afterwards married Michael Decker, a German, who settled upon the place, and they were the parents of a number of children, one of whom, John Adam Decker, was a soldier in the Revolution, a member of Capt. Jacob Moser's company, Sixth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line.

After driving a short distance to the eastward, about one and one-half miles from the public road, on an elevation, the place was pointed out where the Swatara Church stood, which was built prior to the year 1740, one of its first pastors being Rey, Conrad Templeman. It is one of the few dead and lost churches of the Reformed and Lutheran, and the cause for this is that when William Jones laid out the town of Williamsburg, now Jonestown, the members of the Swatara Church in that region became communicants of the Jonestown churches and others at the village of Fredericksburg, which lay to the north of the lost church, where we soon crive and stop with Gideon Schnatterle, whose age borders on three score and ten. He was a son of Jacob-Schnatterle and like father, like son, was long a justice of the perces for Bethel township, surveyor, ven-

due-crier and scrivener. Jacob Schnatterle in his life time settled thirty-three estates, and the conveyancing and serivening business done by the father and son are verified by the large number of deeds and legal papers in their possession. Henry Schnatterle, the grandfather of our host was the son of Henry, the son of George Philip Schnatterle, born in the year 1704, who emigrated to America from Germany, landing at Philadelphia, October 11, 1732. He shortly afterwards came to Bethel township, Lancaster, now Lebanon county, Province and State of Pennsylvania. He was the father of six sons and two daughters. Two of his sons were murdered by the Indians April 7, 1758.

Before we start on our tour of the Swatara region and while our friend, Mr. Schnatterle, who is to accompany us, prepares to do so, we take a look at the town of "Nassau," which name was given by the founder, Frederick Stump, and like most towns founded a century or more ago, nick-named "Stumpe Stettle," after the founder's surname, which the town hore until the year 1826, when the post office was established. In the year 1843, almost a century after its founding, it was changed and the founder further honored by naming it after his christian name. Fredericksburg. It is a quiet village with no railroads or electric ears to annoy the staid descendants of the worthy German pioneers who settled in this region,

We start to the westward, and on the farm adjoining the town, originally owned by John Groh, now by Joseph Gipple, we are pointed to the place where stood during the provincial wars a block house, which was only removed a few years ago. The lay of the land here is just such as

would be traveled by parties on a maranding excursion. Elizabeth Run leads by this place northwest towards the mountain, and on both sides of the stream are meadow lands which in early days were grown up with tall underbrush such as any one bent on mischief and harm would follow and at the same time have the stream to guide or lead them back to the Swatara, for the woods were composed of large trees and very little underbrush and hence the Indians could not canceal themselves so readily. We proceed on our journey following the public road running parallel with the mountain, and when about two and one-half miles west of Fredericksburg, after passing some six or seven farms once owned by Henry Schnatterle, Sr., our friend's great-grandfather, we come to the farm now owned by a Mrs. Hummel, on which is located a graveyard on the top of a hill and in a very neglected and sad condition, and by the size and height of the trees prove that it is more than a century and a half old. Here are buried two of Henry Schnatterle's Sr., brothers, who on the evening of April 7, 1758, were murdered and scalped by the Indians, and during the same day and night a woman was killed and scalped further down the valley, and Michael Sauter and William Hart and a widow woman taken captive. We are now within sight of the Swatara creek, but turning back from the Schnatterle farm a short distance we face toward the mountain and drive some distance to the northward and are soon at the place we wish to visit-the Bethel Moravian graveyard at the "Loch" or Swatara.

When in the month of May, 1896, in company with the Scotch-Irish Congress of America to the battlefield of Gettys-

burg, I stood at the place called the "High Water Mark" of the Rebellion, my bosom swelled with love and admiration for those brave and valiant boys in blue as they stood the charge of Pickett's men and at last restored to this land of ours a united country and destroyed any further hope of State sovereignty. Just so on the day of my visit to this historical spot on the Swatara, did my mind run back one hundred and fifty-eight years ago and saw through the vista of history what terrible devastation of property and loss of lives by those savage red men, whose natures had become inflamed by the treacherous Frenchmen, perpetrating deeds unequaled by any set of pirates and robbers, that I exclaimed to myself, here is the high water mark of the Indian warfare-butchery and robbery in the Province of Penn sylvania, for cruelty marked every path and step of the Indian in this region. Hus band and father stricken and scalped before his wife and children, the mother and wife ruthlessly torn from children and husband, outraged and then murdered. and scalped, and the helpless children were either murdered or carried into captivity and forced to make long distances as in the instance of Regina Hartman, which occurred but a short distance from where we are, or the Barnett and Mackey children, who resided in Hanover. Well could the late 1. D. Rupp, for whom the Pennsylvania-German Society, if not the State of Pennsylvania, owe a monument to be erected somewhere, for what he has done to preserve the records and history of the German pioneers, in gathering historical matter more than fifty years ago, securing much from the lips of those who were upon the fields of carnage in the dark days of the early settlers and during

the days of the Revolution, and we repeat here what he recorded when writing of Bethel township, Lebanon county, when he says: "The condition of the frontier settlers or inhabitants were truly deplorable; not only were they surprised by the ferocious, blood-thirsty savages, but sickness rendered their unenviable condition still more dismal. They had not the means to engage forces or scouters to apprise them of the Indiaus' invasious, or prevent their incursions. In these circumstances they had to appeal to a deaf government and to the sympathies of their fellow citizens for means."

Yonder, tis true, scarcely three miles to the northwest, stood Fort Swatara at Tolihaio Gap, and a short distance south of the fort "Hess' Block House," where under orders dated January 6, 1756, the year the barbarous deeds were done in this region, Capt. Frederick Smith drafted "fifty of the best men beonging to his company, who were mustered by James Reed, Esq., and were engaged for a certain time-not more than three months.' On January 26 they were ordered to procord to the "Gap at Tolihaio, where Swatara comes through the mountain, and erect a fort;" but as the depredations were then going on all along the valleys bordering the "Blue Mountains," it made it necessary to distribute the soldiers around among the various farm houses and thus they were divided and not so effective. This place, Fort Swatara, was made the central point, where the men were arranged for distribution, and eight men of Capt. Sm.th's company were to assist the people in the "Ho'e," where murder had been committed, to gather in the harvest and stay over night in the Moravian niceting house. So it can be seen with men distributed along the sparsely settled region from Fort Manaday to Dietrick Sixs they were of very little effect, and destruction of property and life continued, the Palatinate and Prench Hugenot, whether Moravian, Lutheran or Reformed met their fate.

I might mention that our own brave soldier and useful civilian, Col. James Burd, was here at various times.

We stated a moment ago that at this point the Swatara Gap passes through the mountain, and the earliest records we have locates a trail or Indian path leading from the Delaware River westward through the Tulpehocken settlement on its route to Shamokin or Fort Augusta, and passes this location along the "Hole Mountain" or "Kleine Berg," and came within one-fourth of a mile of the Moravian church. This path afterwards became the King's highway, which was ordered laid out January 30, 1768. Another Indian path led from this point along the south side of the mountain westward to Harris' Ferry, and then northward along the river to Shamokin. And as Bishop Cammerhoff records in his narrative in the year 1748, on a visit to his Bethel brethren, took "this latter route after we reflected it is true imposed upon us additional miles of travel, but we would have the river for a guide and that at the settlements we could bait our horses,' While the Indian depredations were severe all along the Kattatinny or Blue Mountains from the River Susquehanna down through the Swatara region, then leaving the mountain at Dietrick Six's, which place is located across the Lebanon county line in Berks county, and then, as path and afterwards King's highway, on through the Tulpehocken region. No

where were the outrages so severe and the atrocities so great as here in the Swatara region or Bethel township, now Lebanou county.

We have spoken of the "Hole" and which may, and in fact has been referred to by many as the gap where the creek passes through the mountain. This is an error no one should fall into, as it derives its name,"the hole," or "Derloch" from an entirely different circumstance. There is a peculiar depression in the earth's surface between two mountains extending from Swatara creek on the west about nine miles eastward, ending near Millersburg in Berks county. On the north it is bounded by the Kittatinny or Blue Mountain, and on the south by a small mountain, which is not more than a ridge at some places and is called the Hole Mountain, "Der Loch Berg" or "Der Kleine Berg." At the western end it was frequently called in early days "Der Grosz Loch" and at the eastern end "Der Kleine Loch." It is now mostly known as Monroe Valley, having received its name in honor of President Monroe by Jonathan Seidel, who many years ago erected a furnace or forge and named it Monroe.

You may consider me sentimental or enthusiastic in this, but listen to what one, who is more able than I to tell his sentiment on an occasion when he visited the other end of this valley: "Where is the mind that can penetrate into its history, where the pen that can portray its grandeur and glory? How many million times have the magnificent beams of the morning sun crowned its towering head with a halo of light, and how many times have the same beams, after showering their life-giving warmth and brightness"

upon these people of the Swatara before it was drawn in behind the mountain.

We are now at the "Hernhute," God's Aere, and on which was creeted a church. Before entering this sacred enclosure we remain motionless and survey the country from all points, and contrast the present with what it was more than a century and a half ago as told us by the historian at that time. To the east we have the view of the fertile farms of Bethel township, Lebanon county, while still further east the rich German county of Berks, the home of Conrad Weiser and the three Spykers -Benjamin, Peter and Henry. To the south we have a view of the prolific and wellkept farms of the county of Lebanon, which has given to the country many prominent men, and when we face to the north what shall we say of the beautiful and noble Blue or Kittatiany Mountain there, to-day as silent as she was when she sheltered the Red Man and never nubosomed the stories she could have told of the depredations committed in the past, Stretching from the Empire State of New York on the Delaware, down through the greatest of the States in the Union -Pennsylvania-on through the Southern States, telling all who gaze upon it that as then, so now and during all the intervening time she is the band which binds the North and the South as one people. We feel that with burning brain and fired eyes as if we should not wish to view the fourth and last point of the compass, the western stretch along the mountain, but we were then reminded that "westward the empire takes its course," so too we gaze and wander over the territory toward the setting sun and are reminded that but a short distance

beyond the Swatara is the Hanover settlement, where located our aggressive Scotch-Irish friends and neighbors, and not far from the mountain they erected long, long ago their Ebenezer, the Monaday Presbyterian Church and out from that race have gone through all the gencrations from then until now the descendants who have and continue to occupy positions in life that dare be the envy of all our ambitions. But how different now compared with then, as we call to mind what occurred just one hundred and forty years ago from next Monday, May 16, 1757, when "wurde Johannes Spitler, Jr., ohne weid von seinem Hause, an der Schwatara, von moerdeishen Indianern umbefallen und ermordert." Such is a story from the old Moravian church record of Bethel, where we are visiting and now about to enter the sacred enclosure, which was founded by the Moravian colony located here at or prior to the year 1740. The earliest missionary of the United Brethren or "Hernhuter" was Mr. Spangenberg, and he first learned of his people through Conrad Weiser, the interpreter for the government. The graveyard, like most of the early burial places, where the house of worship has disappeared, is in a very sad and neglected condition. There is but very little trace left of the place where the house of God stood, which was a two-story log weather-boarded building thirty by forty feet; the first floor was divided into three rooms, the second into one. The first theor was where the pious minister resided, on the second floor where the religious services were held. The house was removed in 1878.

At first we felt that we were not to be rewarded for our trip, as it was mainly to secure a transcript from the ancient, moss-covered and time-stained stones, and as we saw only a few laying here and there our disappointment became painful. Knowing that the custom was to number each grave and each stone lay flat upon the ground, and in size varying, but here about fourteen by sixteen inches, and of different kind and color of stone. After viewing and going over the graveyard we discovered that many of them had disappeared in the ground, and by much effort they could be found and dug or pried out. After removing the earth and moss deposited there by the hand of time we secured a transcript of nearly all, and they deserve to be preserved in this way, as the tooth of time undoubtedly has destroyed some, while a number that we found are almost decipherable. They are as follows:

No. 4.
JACOB
HANTSCH geb.
Gemorde
von den Wilden
d. 26 Juny
1756
alt ungefer 27
Jahr

No. 6.
JOH GEORGE
Mies geb
d. 28 Sept. 1732
Ermondt von
den Wilden
d. 26 Juny
1756
alt 16 Ja. 9 mot.

No. 7. FREDERICK WEISER Geb den I May 1740 Ermordt von den Wilden d. 26 Juny 1756 alt 16 Ja. 11 mo. 5 da.

No. 48, ANIMARGRE DANIEL BORNS kind geb d. 25 August 1769 Verschied d. 28 July 1770 alt 11 monach.

No. 22.
MARGARETTAM
Borin
DANIELS chefrau
Geb in Decem.
1702 verschied
d. 5 July 1772
ihrer altes
40 Jahr.

No. 23, DANIEL DANIEL BORNS kind gele den April verscheid d. 18 September 1772 alt 23 woehen

No. 26.
CATHARINE
SPITLERIN
is geborn
in dem 16
August 1700
verschied
den 14 Mettz
1773.

No. 28.
JOHN GEORGE MIES
Geb d. 20 Nov. 4704 in
Bortenan verschied
d. 26 Nov. 4724.

No. 29. Gebohren den 25 Janur 1757 CATHARINA BECKIN aus dem Zeit den 27ten November 1774.

No. 30. Gebohren den 17ten den January 1763 ELIZARETHA BECKIN aus den Zeit den 12 Februah 1775.

No. 31, Gebohren den 15 den December, 1731, MARI BARB RECKIN Geborhin BORIN und Gerstorben September 17 1775.

No. 36, JULIAN MIES, gob. 17 Sept. 1718 in Nercherg verschied d. 17 May, 1785.

No. 38.
CATHARINE MHES
Geb d 7fen Sept. 1734 in
Bothel Townslop
verschied d 7 2 ch
1778

No. 41. HEINRICH FABER geb d. 7 Dec. 1722 verschied d. 5 April 1779.

No. 42 CATHARIN SPITLER Gob d. 13 Juny 1743 In Bethel Township verschied d. 30 Juny

1779.

No. 18, JOHN HEIN-RICH HECKENDORN Gebohren den 5 April 1786 verscheid den 22 April 1787,

No. 53, MARIA CHRISTENA MIES geb. d. 31 August 1787 in Bethel Township verscheid d. 11 Feb. 1796,

> No. 54. CATHARIN PABERIN gele d. 23 Sept. 1729 in starb den 15 Mar. 1796

No. 60 JACOB FABER geb d. 3 Dec. 1774 in Bethel Township yerseboid d. 11 Peb. 1792. No. 64, JACOB SPITLER Geb d. 25 August 1722 in der Schweitz und verscheid d. 5 Nov. 1791.

No. 65, JONAS FABER Geb d, 4 Matz 1785 in Bethel Township versched d, 27 Nov 1797.

No. 66, CATHARINA CPITLERN Geb.d. 12 June 1788 in Bethel Township verscheid d. 17 Oct-1797.

No. 70.
ANA MARGARETHA
STITTLELERIN
ein geboren Winkelblechin
Geb 22 Dec. 1750
vehsche d 8 Feb
1803.

No. 72. CHRISTIAN HECKENDON Geb.d. 21 Merz 1778 verschool 25 Aug. 1800.

No. 71
GEORGE CASPER
KOHR
Gebohren
in Erstadt in der Pfalz
den 76 in Octo, 1721
verscheid
den 28ten May 1801.

MARIA CATHARINA HECKENDORNIN Geb d. 21 Oct. 1750 verscheid d. 14 April 1762.

No. 76, JACOB SPITLER Geb in Bethel d. 6 Deeb. 1769 verscheid d. 28 May 1802.

No. 80, BERNHARD MEIS Gebohren in Bethel d. 22ten Janu, 1774 verscheid d. ten Febu, 1803,

No. 84.
VERONICA NANOER om
geb SPITTLERIN
geb, den 1st Nov. 4720
in Benweit in der
Schwertz verscheid
d 16th July 1801.

No. 86, JACOB FABER Geb in Bethel d. 41ten June 1776 verscheid d. 13 Oct. 1804.

No. 88.
CATH MEYERIN
Geb FABERIN
Geb in Bethel
d. 24th Merz 1761
verscheid
d. 15th Nov. 1804.

No. 91.
ELIZABETH BRONNE
Gebohren GIESING
Gebohren in Emere
den 6ten Dec. 1757
verscheid
den 16ten Sept. 1810.

No. 94.
CATHARINE BURCHMEYER
Gebohren in
Bethel Township
den 17ten
January 1778
verscheid
den 24ten April
1816.

No. 113 FRIDR BUCHMEYER Gold 7(cn Nov. 1779 Gos. d 29(cn Merz 1821 d 16(cn Nov. 1824 alt 41 J. 1 m. 22t.

No. 115.
JOHN PHILIP BECK
Wohren gebohren
den 15 Mai 1768 und
starb 15 December
1821.

No. 128. CHRISTIAN SCHERT Gebobren d Uten Dec. 1776 Gestohben

No. 137. MICHAEL BECK WURDER Gebohren den 3 April 1805 Starb d. 18 November 1820 JOHANNES BECK JOHANN Gebohren den 3 January 1800 und starb 5ten December 1829.

> JACOB TILL born March 12 ten at Kuhne Walde in Moravia depart Jan. 22 1783.

ROSINA TILL. Geb Dec. 3 d. 1721 at Schonbrun in Silesia Starb Jan 21 1783.

ELIZABETH KOHRIN CASPER KOHRS

Erefrane Geb in Juli 1708 verscheid Nov, 20 1763.

AN ROSINA KOHRIN born Nov. 27 1760 in Bethel verscheid d. Oct. 8 1763.

MARIN MAGDALENA STOHRIN ist geholten d. 16ten December 1790 ist gestorben 24ten

1796.

HIER RUHET JOHAN PHILLP BECK ist gebohren 2 d Feb. 1727 und Getorben den 22 Feb. 1792.

SALOME BECK dochter von JOHAN PHI LIP und CHRISTIANA BECK Gebohren November 4 1802 Starb April 29 1858.

HHER RUHET
ANNA MARIE MEHAN
Ehegatten von
CASPER KOHR
See wurde gebohren
den 20th Dec. 1745
und starb
den 23th Sept. 1828.

As we finish the laborious undertaking and notice that the time is far spent and the orb of day has already kissed the slopes of the western hills, we retrace our steps back whence we came through Fredericksharg to Jonestown, meditating the while upon this historic section, contrast ing our days with those of the early set tlers in the Swatara region. The settlers left their homes and all their fond associations, crossed the perilous ocean and located here in this township of Bethel, more than one hundred miles from the sea. at the very foot of the mountain, far enough, as they thought "from civilization and out of reach of encroaeltments on their personal rights." And what "terrible, overlanging cruelty drove them hither? What fear induced them to fly from their homes and face the danger of

the Atlantic? What fond hopes inspired them with courage to travel into an unknown land and risk their freedom and their lives with a race of matchless brutes and barbarians?" We may further add, was it religious enthusiasm that induced these excellent and industrous husbandmen and artisans, with their families, to evangelize the Indian, or do they wish to be free and unfettered by thraldom and away from war, bloodshed and death? Then we imagine that after Henry Dubbs, Henry Fischer, Michael Frantz, Abraham Grove, Rudy Huntsecker, Wendel Heyl, Casper Heister, Jacob Meyle, George Miess, the two Schnable, Edunind and John, Casper Scherrich, Ludwig Shuey, John Winger, Michael Sausser, Jacob Heindsche, Frantz Albert and Michael Schnatterley and many others, whether from the Palatinate or Moravia, Latheran or Reformed, who worshiped at Klopp Church or the Moravians of the Bethel, had crected their church house, cleared their lands and erected their humble and insecure cabins, they were to be free and happy. And while this screnity of life d.d continue, little did they think that their good work was slowly developing in the natives a bitter resentment. The red men of the woods, the unlettered worshipers of the "Great Spirit," had not had their hearts pierced with convictions of Christ and his precepts. They could not believe that their new neighbors should be such generous philanthropists as to come so far without a pecuniary reward. Their lands were being occupied, fish and game taken, and their products of the soil consumed. The Indian could not know what this was for, did not understand why various inquiries were made of them for the purchase of lands and hunting

grounds; they became suspicious and soon believed them enemies. Yet, with all this state of mind and suspicion the relations remained unbroken until the breaking out of the war between France and England for our possessions. And soon the French had fanned the flame of hatred and revenge, and then the pioneer German settlers, our forefathers, sacrificed their lives on the frontiers of the Swatara and Tulpeliocken regions. It was not until after the Indians on June 8, 1756, did they believe they were insecure, when between two and four o'clock in the afternoon Felix Munch was murdered while plowing in the field. In the same month fourteen days later, they killed four persons. Franz Albert, b. July 20, 1719, at Duck Ponts, France, a shoemaker; Jacob Hantsch, a stone mason, and two lads. Frederick Weisler and John George Miess, As recorded in the ancient record of the Moravians at Bethel, they were buried the next day. Sunday, which was attended by the soldiers stationed at the fort, and other people, who came to protect them while being buried, the ceremony being performed by Frederick Schlegels, the pastor, as sisted by Brother Samuel Herr. could continue on and recite other murders and cruelties, but this will suffice. And if what I have said will be a stimulus for others of the Historical Society to go out into the ungaracred fields of history in our old Commonwealth, and particularly this section, to dig and delve, then it will not be long until the manufactured and sensational historians of the New England States will place the history of Pennsylvania in the same position that our State has in the Union-the Keystone-not only in the federal arch, but in all that is good, great, and in the advance line.



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